



**Oral Statement: 40th session of the Human Rights Council  
Item 3: General Debate**

8 March 2019  
Speaker: Ruth Manorama

Mr. President,

We give this statement in solidarity with the International Dalit Solidarity Network.

We find it very opportune to bring to the Council's attention the linkages between inequalities and economic, social and cultural rights. We cannot agree more on the multidimensional nature of poverty and on the need to address poverty through reaffirming rights and political participation. Tackling inequalities is key to achieving the SDGs, especially Goals 5, 10, 8, 16 and 17, and we need special attention for groups that enjoy rights to a lesser extent than the rest of society.

The Dalit movement worldwide, in particular Dalit women, shares the same views. We struggle through peaceful means for the empowerment of nearly 120 million Dalit women worldwide. It is we who fight against the worst forms of labor, including contemporary forms of slavery, early marriage, forced conversion, salaries much lower than the legal minimum, higher school drop-out of Dalit girls, and the rate of 1% of Dalit women owing land and property.

Today, we are not here only to speak of our plight. We are also agents of change and we can play a key role in achieving our countries' goals under the SDGs, through inclusion, participation and policies that enable us to enjoy rights on equal footing. We do not ask for charity, we ask for equality and dignity as fellow human beings.

Thank you.

NGO without ECOSOC consultative status in support of the statement